Note: The Education Report can be viewed online at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/report/

Issue No. 42

**In The News**

$2.9M Seismic Work Part of Surrey Schools Upgrade

Education Agreement to Help Kootenay-Columbia Students

Trades School in Mission to Receive Eco-Addition

Nicola Similkameen Strongstart BC Centres Open

Minister Visits China to Build on Education and Economy

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**Links**

- Media Room
- StrongStart BC
- LearnNow BC
- School Choices
- Healthy Schools
- ReadNow BC
- School District Visits

## Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

As another school year comes to a close, I would like to reflect on some of our shared successes.

From investing in new trades training equipment, to creating a new appeal process for students and parents, to passing historic legislation so that First Nations can have jurisdiction over the education of children in their communities, the Province has continued to introduce more choice for all parents and students.

We have also helped B.C. lead the world in sustainable environmental management. With B.C. Green Schools eco kits sent to all interested schools and investments in new green school buildings and school buses, B.C.'s education system both teaches and models environmental responsibility.

And new initiatives in literacy mean B.C. is poised to become North America's best-educated, most literate jurisdiction. This year, we added more StrongStart BC early learning centres, expanded ReadNow BC, the provincial literacy action plan, by making all adult basic education tuition free, and helped unite the country for the Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum.

Thank you for your help, and for serving B.C. students, every day, all year. I'm looking forward to September, when together we will make B.C. a model for healthy living and physical fitness. Until then, have a happy summer filled with your choice of good books and fun physical activities.

## Province-Backed Program Pairs Blind Students with Mentors

The Province has provided a grant to support the Smooth Transitions program which helps children with vision problems navigate and safely get to know their communities and their schools. The program has the Canadian National Institute for the Blind pair students with mentors. Read more.

Minister Bond joins Brad Waghorn from the CNIB to unveil the latest project in Prince George on June 13th.

## HOT TOPIC

On Wednesday June 11, 2008, the Government of Canada apologized to the country's Aboriginal people for residential schools that were created to "remove and isolate children from the influence of their home, families, traditions and cultures."

B.C.'s government and its education partners know that including Aboriginal culture in the classroom is in fact an excellent way not only to celebrate Aboriginal culture but also engage Aboriginal students and help them succeed.

That's why the B.C. government is signing four new Aboriginal education enhancement agreements to mark this year's National Aboriginal Day on Saturday June 21, 2008. This brings B.C.'s total to 42 agreements.

Aboriginal education enhancement agreements commit school districts, Aboriginal communities and the Ministry of Education to work together to improve the success of Aboriginal students.

The agreements ensure Aboriginal culture is reflected in public schools, and Aboriginal communities are involved in the design of programs, services and curriculum delivery.

Each agreement specifies a unique approach. Possible activities include everything from bringing elders into the classroom to speak with students to choosing Aboriginal literature for study to inviting students to learn outdoor skills such as snowshoeing.

The presence of Aboriginal culture in a school gives Aboriginal students a sense of belonging. It also gives all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, a sense of pride in a heritage that they can celebrate.

Read more about the recent Aboriginal education enhancement agreements in the Central Coast, Kootenay-Columbia, Kootenay Lake and Surrey school districts.

## Reading Corner

A cat grants a dying seagull three wishes. He will resist eating the egg she is leaving behind. He will guard that egg until it hatches. And he will then teach the baby bird to fly. To live up to this last promise he will need unparalleled ingenuity and unwavering faith. This book, examining courage, compassion and the boundless devotion underpinning the bonds between family and friends, is suitable for students in grades 4-5.

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